

# THE BLIND AMERICAN

INKPRINT EDITION

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN BROTHERHOOD FOR THE BLIND  
A CHARITABLE AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

2652 SHASTA ROAD      BERKELEY 8, CALIF.

SEPTEMBER ISSUE      ---- 1963

## THE BLIND AMERICAN

Published monthly in Braille and inkprint and distributed free to the blind by the American Brotherhood for the Blind, Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, President. National headquarters and editorial offices at 2652 Shasta Road, Berkeley 8, California.

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## MY FIRST YEAR WITH THE PEACE CORPS

By Marilyn Brandt

(Editor's note: The first blind American to serve with the Peace Corps, Miss Brandt recently completed her initial year in an arduous and challenging assignment: teaching the blind population of the under-developed Dominican Republic. Herewith, written expressly for this journal, is her report on that precedent-setting experience.)

Can you imagine living in a country in which the needs and capabilities of the blind are practically unknown to the public? The Dominican Republic estimates its blind population at over 1,500, and yet only provides one training institution which houses between twenty and twenty-five students. No job-placement service exists; therefore, the blind are unemployed. My job as a teacher at the National School for the Blind in Santo Domingo is one which has many challenges to offer.

Perhaps I should begin by introducing myself. My name is Marilyn Brandt. I am originally from San Antonio, Texas. After completion of 12 years at the Texas School for the Blind, I attended Southwest Texas State Teachers College for four years. I hold a B.S. degree in education and a teaching certificate on the secondary school level. I spent three months at Texas Lion's Camp, a rehabilitation and personal adjustment center for the adult blind.

Last fall I began work on my masters degree, but my work was interrupted by an invitation to train with a Peace Corps group bound for the Dominican Republic in February. I knew little about the work I would be doing here, during my training in Vermont and Puerto Rico, but I was aware of the need felt in this country for advancing the education and rehabilitation of the blind.

It was difficult to decide just what to do, what subjects to teach, what projects to start. Sandra Ford, another volunteer in our group, was assigned to work with me. We spent many hours trying to decide what was really most important for the school, the students, and the future progress of the blind men and women of this country. We attended a conference held in Puerto Rico and sponsored by the American Foundation for the Blind; and we came back to this country with many new ideas and approaches to the work here. The school sent me to New York to confer further with the American Foundation, and to purchase materials for the school.

It is difficult to think in terms of a complete program of education, rehabilitation, and job placement with only an under-staffed and much neglected one-building institution as a beginning. We lacked materials, teachers, space, and most important, we lacked a well-coordinated and sincere effort on the part of the government to help us start any program or project. We had the support of the American agencies, United States Information Service, Alliance for Progress, and of course the Peace Corps; but we knew that we must make the Dominican government feel a real responsibility and desire to help because, after all, this was their school.

Sandra began teaching typing and signature writing. I taught daily living skills and math. Soon we received canes as a donation from the Peace Corps, and a basketball for our recreational program. One of the students who had attended the rehabilitation center in Puerto Rico began teaching travel classes. Sandra started a ball team. I organized a Bingo night each week, using the set I had purchased in New York. We showed the arts and crafts teacher how to make pot-holders and how to work with reed, and this led to a whole new field of creativity for the students. We sponsored dances and game nights every three or four weeks. Then suddenly it was June, and school was out for the summer.

During July and August we brailled maps and labeled tapes of classical music made by the United States Information Service. Sandra began work on a relief map of this island. One of the Peace Corps volunteers built a small vending stand, by which means we will train some of our students to sell candies, magazines, etc. We made a list of needs for the kitchen which the Alliance for Progress promised to help us obtain in order to teach our girls to cook. And, we made a few visits around the island to get an idea of the home lives of some of our students.

We are in hopes that a representative from the American Foundation for the Blind will arrive here soon to help us plan and establish a more thorough program. A new volunteer, Geer Wilcox, has come to help us in the school as well as in other areas of the program. Our braille teacher is going to the States for further training. We are expecting about three new students this year.

School begins in another week, and we are anxious to really get back to work. The enthusiasm and motivation of our students is overwhelming. We must make this school year really worthwhile, not only for our own personal satisfaction and for that of our students, but for the advancement of the entire concept of blindness -- its problems and its necessity to be understood. If we can leave this country with just a handful of students relatively well-rehabilitated and holding jobs

responsibly and independently, we will feel that we have made a small contribution toward progress.

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## PIONEERING IN THE IDAHO SCHOOLS

By Helen and Ralph Branson

(Editor's note: Ralph Branson and his wife, Helen Kitchen Branson, both took on new teaching positions this fall in the Wilder, Idaho, public high school. It is not very unusual, perhaps, to find a husband and wife teaching in the same school; but the success of the Bransons signallizes an event which may well be without precedent in the history of American public education. Both Mr. and Mrs. Branson are blind. Following is their own account of their mutual experience.)

It is rather interesting and ego-satisfying at times to be the pioneers in any venture. While teaching in the public schools in California and New York is no novelty for blind persons, in Idaho it certainly is. We both found this out rather graphically, when we returned to Idaho after twenty years' service in correctional work with a private agency in California.

For some time we had been considering the possibility of teaching in the public schools. When we applied in Idaho, we found many friendly people, but after 29 applications in a total of six different states, we found that most school superintendents do not consider the blind to be desirable candidates for teaching below the junior college level. Fortunately, however, we did find several districts which were willing to consider one blind individual as a possible employee. But two blind people in the same district! The superintendent himself might be sympathetic, but frequently the school board itself was unwilling. Finally, however, in Wilder, Idaho, both the superintendent and the school board proved willing to give both of us positions on a trial basis. Thus, we are presently both teaching at the senior high school level.

American History, World History, American Government and Civics make up the teaching load of Ralph Branson; he is also advisor for the senior class. Mrs. Branson teaches Special Education Home-

making, (girls of high school age, but mentally retarded capacity); Freshman Homemaking, Advanced Homemaking, Sociology, and two sections of Business English. She is advisor for the school paper, THE WILD CAT GROWLS, and for the Future Homemakers of America Club, and is co-advisor of the freshman class. Both of the Bransons have M.A. degrees in sociology from the University of Southern California.

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### THREE STATES GO UNDER

Public assistance programs for the blind in Florida, Hawaii and Oklahoma have "gone under" -- and the welfare prospects of thousands of blind persons have gone under with them.

Those three states have received approval from the Federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare of plans to merge their programs of aid to the blind, aged and disabled under Title XVI -- the optional combined category enacted last year as an amendment to the Social Security Act.

Meanwhile, according to the federal agency, similar plans on the part of seven other states and two territories are now under consideration (Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands). Four more states (Alaska, Illinois, Kansas and Vermont) have passed enabling legislation but have not yet submitted plans.

"Merger of the adult programs," the federal department states with deceptive blandness, "is expected to make administration simpler and more efficient through use of common standards and procedures for all needy adult recipients."

In that terse statement are contained both the real reason behind the massive pressure for the new joint category -- and the real reason for equally massive opposition to it by the blind and those interested in their welfare. Administration may indeed be "made simpler" by treating all three categories of adult recipients -- blind, aged and disabled -- as if they are identical. But the application of "common standards" and uniform procedures means in actual likelihood the destruction of all the gains and distinctive achievements won by the blind under Title X over the past three decades.

For the blind, under Title XVI, things will not be "simpler" -- they will be simply worse.

In Hawaii the surrender of the needy blind to the catch-all category carries a special note of tragedy. For in the island state -- through the persistent efforts of the NFB and the Hawaii Association of the Blind -- the stage had been set for almost certain enactment of a progressive new aid law containing a separate program for the blind. That prospect has now been extinguished, on the eve of its realization. The substantial gains which were about to be made for Hawaii's blind cannot possibly be legislated for the aged and disabled as well -- because of the many millions of dollars which would be involved.

Nor is this defeat only a temporary setback. According to federal interpretation of the amendment, once a state has gone under Title XVI it may never extricate itself. The separate program of aid to the blind under Title X, with its independent features and hard-won standards, is thenceforth forever closed.

In the course of the coming months, blind Americans should keep close watch over the fate of their welfare programs in those states which have "gone under." In going under Title XVI, have they also gone under the wheels of a steamroller set to level their distinctive standards and allowances to the scale of the lowest common denominator?

The threat is most obvious and urgent with respect to the cash grant. In Hawaii, as of last March, the average monthly payment to the needy blind was \$76.20; for the needy aged it was \$49.87. In Florida, the average grant to the blind was \$59.02; for the aged it was \$47.40. In Oklahoma, the figures were \$96.55 for the blind, \$74.19 for the aged.

In future months, will the aged go up to the average of the blind -- or will the blind go down to the average of the aged?

The average grant figures are only a single indication of the general threat which confronts blind welfare as a result of the common-standards requirement under Title XVI.

The same clear and present danger -- of the loss of liberalized provisions and independent gains won through years of struggle -- exists with regard to residence requirements, responsibility of relatives, lien laws, and numerous other provisions which often vary greatly among the three adult categories, and generally in favor of the blind.

Three states have now gone under. Eleven more states and two territories are about to submerge. Will the blind in the rest of the

nation be dragged down with them?

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## ORGANIZED LABOR IN SHELTERED WORKSHOPS

By Stanley A. Munson

(Editor's note: The following brief article presents an unusual and hopeful perspective on the continuing struggle of blind sheltered shop workers for the rights of self-organization and the fruits of collective bargaining. It points to a remarkably successful campaign, initiated almost a generation ago by blind employees of the Seattle Lighthouse, to secure those rights and improve wages and working conditions. Mr. Munson was the organizer, and for 28 years the president, of Local 84 of the International Broom and Whisk Makers Union.)

Much can be said for the need of organized labor in the agency workshop. The failure of welfare agencies to set up any minimum standards in the sheltered workshops that management must adhere to is chiefly responsible for the substandard conditions found in agency shops in almost every state in the Union.

Many laws have been passed by Congress to protect the handicapped worker. But what good are these laws if the worker has no power or organized authority behind him to force management to live up to them? On the one hand we pass laws to protect the rights of the handicapped -- and on the other hand the National Labor Relations Board authorizes releases and exemptions that completely nullify the intent of those protective laws. In recent years it has become apparent that these edicts of the NLRB have often been used not to put the handicapped to work but rather to cover up the inefficiency of workshop management.

Twenty-eight years ago the broom makers in the Lighthouse for the Blind of Seattle, Washington, organized Local 84 of the International Broom and Whisk Makers Union. It took nine long months for the members of Local 84 to gain their first contract with the management of the Lighthouse. The blind American who wishes to work for his livelihood should be interested in learning of the progress which the members of Local 84 have made in the nearly three decades since their work began.

Twenty-eight years ago, the top broom winder was earning \$16.20 a week; today the average broom winder is earning \$85 a week. Where 28 years ago the top floor worker was earning \$20 a week, today the top floor worker makes \$66 a week. In 1935 the beginner or new employee was informed that he could come to work and labor for no pay until such time as management felt he was capable of producing value. After several weeks of no pay at all, the new employee was given a dollar a day; and after several months he might earn as much as \$12 a week for average floor work. Today the new employee in the Lighthouse starts in at 60¢ an hour for a 60-day training period, and then is brought up to the minimum wage. The Federal Certificate of Operations for Sheltered Workshops, included in our present contract with the Lighthouse management, insures that the new employee will be given wage adjustments in accordance with his work ability.

The terms of the present union contract existing Local 84 and the Lighthouse for the Blind, includes the basic principles of organized labor: a union shop for all broom winders and stitchers, with the opportunity for other employees to join the union also if they wish; a five percent raise for all employees in the Lighthouse (bringing them up to the highest piece-work rates in the country); a seniority clause, and an arbitration clause.

The slow and steady progress made by our union, from the bottom to the top of the ladder of security and opportunity, has not been easy. Although most of the conflicts have been fought out behind the scenes, our disputes have often been very bitter. But our successful struggle for survival, and indeed for continuous improvement of conditions, may well stand as a model and precedent for other blind workers in the sheltered shops of America.

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## TRIBULATIONS OF A BLIND TEACHER

(Editor's note: Following is a condensation of a paper prepared for delivery before the October convention of the Michigan Council of the Blind by Miss Evelyn Weckerly, a blind schoolteacher of Berkley, Michigan. Miss Weckerly's articulate personal narrative, reprinted from the MCB BULLETIN, seems to us eminently worthy of attention by blind Americans everywhere.)

In recent months I have had that experience which comes to nearly all of us at some time or another: finding a job. Blind persons who have had this experience know how frustrating and discouraging it can be. My own story, although not new, may possibly help other blind persons who are looking for skilled positions.

As a child, I attended both the Detroit public schools and the state school for the blind. In the fall of 1959, I entered Michigan State University and majored in English. Although I wanted to become an English teacher, the school of education would not at first place me for student teaching; however, two other students and I were so far advanced in our training that the school felt obligated to do so. The first two of us did so well as student teachers that the policy was changed. Blind students are now admitted for placement, but they must be interviewed first and demonstrate capability to do the work.

Great as the demand for teachers is, I had to wait six months for a contract offer. Throughout this period I felt considerable discouragement and frustration owing to public ignorance and prejudice. About half of the 163 applications sent out were answered within a reasonable period of time; about half of those answering stated that the position was filled or that I shouldn't have to face some of their particular problems. The most enraging responses in this group were from those who hoped my "dream" would come true, but felt they simply could not hire me. The other respondents either sent application forms or accepted my letter and college credentials as sufficient. I had six interviews.

I firmly feel I was extremely fortunate: first, in getting a copy of the conference report on Exchange of Ideas and Devices conducted by California's blind teachers, a great help in my student teaching; and second, in contacting Dr. Grant, who made available to me a wealth of information. I was thus able to get a job within six months instead of waiting for years, as is the case with many professionally trained blind persons.

My experience illustrates the need for good communication between blind people in training and those already employed. Much can be done through the schools. Detailed information should be made available to high school students about opportunities in various vocations, and details should be provided on how blind people can meet the specific problems arising in each field. Names and addresses of successful blind people in a field could be provided not only in high schools, but also in college placement bureaus and counseling centers.

Finally, there should be closer coordination between the Division of Services for the Blind and college and universities. Although

the individual blind person should put forth his utmost to secure skilled jobs, he should also have access to a greater number of resources than those which presently exist.

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## WASHINGTON REPORT: PROGRAMS IN PROGRESS

By John F. Nagle

(Editor's note: Mr. Nagle is chief of the Washington office of the National Federation of the Blind. His report covers recent and current activities on the Congressional front which affect the interests of blind Americans.)

The most significant recent event on Capitol Hill was the introduction on September 25 of a Senate bill duplicating the positive proposals of the "King bill" (H.R. 6245), which had been introduced in the House last spring. Presented by our long-time friend Senator Vance Hartke of Indiana, the new measure (S. 2181) is designed to amend Titles X and XVI of the Social Security Act in order to "more effectively encourage and assist blind individuals to achieve rehabilitation and restoration to a normal, full and fruitful life."

Like its companion measure introduced by Congressman Cecil R. King of California, the Hartke bill calls for the following specific improvements in blind aid: it abolishes responsibility of relatives, liens, and residence requirements; requires states to fix a floor for aid and to meet individual needs above that floor; allows the states under Title XVI to retain separate standards and separate administration, and to secure improved medical sharing; increases federal matching, and provides that new case services not be tied to the aid grant, be given only if requested, and be adapted to the problems of the blind. (For details on the King-Hartke bill, see THE BLIND AMERICAN, May, 1963.)

Much planning and effort preceded the introduction of S. 2181. A month before Senator Hartke planned to put his bill in the Senate "hopper," he sent a letter to all of his colleagues, inviting them to join with him as cosponsors. Then, as the NFB's representative in

Washington, I called upon all of the Senate offices (99) and discussed the provisions of the Hartke measure with staff assistants to the Senators. Later I followed up those office visits with a telephone call to the legislative and administrative assistants to whom I had talked, notifying them of the definite date when the Hartke bill would be introduced and also urging cosponsorship.

The result of all this work was most gratifying: 21 Senators joined with Senator Hartke in introducing S. 2181. I am sure that readers of THE BLIND AMERICAN will be interested in knowing the names of the Hartke bill cosponsors. (I would further suggest that, if your Senators appear on this list, it would be most helpful if you should choose to write to them, thanking them for cosponsoring the bill, and explaining how important and urgently needed this legislation is. Address your letters: Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, Senate Office Building, Washington 25, D. C.

Here are the Hartke blind-aid bill cosponsors: Mrs. Margaret Chase Smith, Maine; E. L. Bartlett and Ernest Gruening, Alaska; Hugh Scott, Pennsylvania; Ralph Yarborough, Texas; Mrs. Maurine Neuberger and Wayne Morse, Oregon; Lee Metcalf, Montana; Frank Moss, Utah; Hubert Humphrey and Eugene McCarthy, Minnesota; Jennings Randolph, West Virginia; Joseph Clark, Pennsylvania; Stephen Young, Ohio; Daniel Inouye, Hawaii, Birch Bayh, Indiana; Harrison Williams, New Jersey; James Eastland, Mississippi; Daniel Brewster, Maryland; Abraham Ribicoff, Connecticut; Warren G. Magnuson, Washington.

Several weeks after the National Federation's Philadelphia convention, I received a call from a staff assistant of Congressman Robert Corbett of Pittsburgh, advising me that the Congressman had received a letter from a constituent -- one of our members -- asking if there was not something he could do to publicize October 15 as White Cane Safety Day. After some discussion, it was decided that a resolution should be introduced in Congress, calling upon President Kennedy to issue a proclamation declaring October 15, 1963, as "White Cane Safety Day."

On September 24, Congressman Corbett introduced such a resolution in the House of Representatives -- it is House Joint Resolution 753. Although time is short and the federal legislative machinery works slowly, I am still hopeful of Congressional action on this measure in time to allow the President to act on it.

On July 30, the Subcommittee of the U. S. House of Representatives on the Library of Congress held public hearings on a bill, introduced at the request of the National Association for the Physically Handicapped,

which would include the quadriplegics and the "near blind" in the federal Books for the Adult Blind Program.

Along with Gordon Connor, appearing for the American Association of Workers for the Blind, I opposed the bill on behalf of the NFB, contending that, by including nonblind persons in this program so vitally necessary program for the blind, the blind themselves would soon become but a small part of those served by the program, and, as a consequence, the unique needs of the blind would no longer be met. The Federation's position was that, rather than jeopardize the federal program which provides blind people with their only resource for reading matter, there should be created a separate federally-financed program which would make reading material available to all persons, other than the blind, who by virtue of physical disability are unable to read regular print books. At this date, the Subcommittee has taken no action on the Books for the Blind amending bill.

On another front, just a few days after our national convention adopted a resolution endorsing S. 1576, I testified on this measure (which had already passed the Senate with only one dissenting vote) before the House Subcommittee on Public Health and Safety. The bill contains provisions which would improve state programs of special education for all categories of disabled children, including blind children. The Federation had also previously testified in support of these provisions before the Senate Subcommittee on Education.

I am happy to report that S. 1576 has now passed the House of Representatives, and members of both houses of Congress are meeting in conference to work out differences between the two versions of the bill.

Now that the federal Income Tax Reduction bill has passed the House of Representatives, we are waiting for a call to testify before the Senate Finance Committee in support of our bill (which Senator Hartke will introduce shortly) to allow an additional income tax exemption to a taxpayer supporting a dependent who is blind. We testified on this proposal before the House Ways and Means Committee earlier this year, when it was introduced by Congressman King of California as H.R. 1659 (identical to the proposed Hartke bill). However, since the House did not include this proposal in its approved bill, the Federation will make another try in the Senate.

Meanwhile, as a direct result of public hearings held by the Senate Government Operations Committee last June 26, 1962, on amendments to the Randolph-Sheppard Act -- at which the NFB gave its vigorous support to the proposed changes in the Vending Stand

law -- several federal departments and agencies have announced the creation of appeals procedures within their jurisdictions. Although these procedures are no substitute for the Presidentially-appointed Appeals Board which we seek, they do provide a means of obtaining consideration of disputes which may develop between officials in charge of federal buildings and state vending stand licensing agencies, and will help to increase available vending stand locations -- thus providing improved employment opportunities for trained and qualified blind persons under the Randolph-Sheppard Act.

State Prevention of Blindness programs are expected to get a big boost from the increased federal funds authorized for the Crippled Children's Program in H.R. 7544, which has already passed the House of Representatives and is now before the Senate Finance Committee. When this measure was being considered by the House Ways and Means Committee in executive sessions, the Federation gave its endorsement of the views of the American Foundation for the Blind, as contained in a statement submitted by its Washington representative, Irvin P. Schloss.

We are now prepared to present supporting testimony on amendments to H.R. 7544, should the Finance Committee hold public hearings on this measure. One amendment would change the name of the Crippled Children's Program to "Services for Children with Physical or Mental Impairment," thus more accurately describing the nature of the program and the scope of services provided. This change in name should stimulate the use of the resources of the federal program for children, many do not now avail themselves of it since they believe, from the misleading title, that it is intended to serve only orthopedically impaired children, whereas its actual purpose is to serve a broad area of disabilities in children.

Another amendment to be proposed by Nagle and Schloss would broaden the state plan requirements for this program so as to assure that all disabled children, whatever the nature of their disability, are provided with needed remedial or restorative medical and surgical services under the program.

## A PROJECT FOR THE DEAF-BLIND

By Ethel Mahaney

(Editor's note: The following communication from our Colorado correspondent, Mrs. Ethel Mahaney of Denver, raises a point and outlines a project which should both be of interest to other blind Americans.)

I sometimes wonder how many blind people give any thought to the plight of our more unfortunate brothers and sisters -- the deaf-blind. When you are listening to the news reports on the radio, television or in the newspapers, do you realize how completely the deaf-blind are deprived of such media of news and information?

For several years now, I have been reporting daily news items in a braille newsletter which I send each week to a deaf-blind man, Clarence Goddard, who lives in Holyoke, Colorado. My project had its inception in a social club organized by a small group of blind persons. Although the club disbanded after three years, I was asked to continue editing its newsletter -- an assignment which I accepted eagerly. At the outset we had agreed to report only local and regional news stories, but when the newsletter became a personal project I decided to include pertinent national and international events as well. For instance, I tried to report, as accurately as possible, the descriptions of all the orbital flights of the astronauts as they came to me over the air.

The deep gratitude which Clarence Goddard expresses in his letters to me is ample reward for that effort. It affords me intense satisfaction to know that I am making life just a little brighter for someone more unfortunate than I am. Perhaps among those who read this there will be another person who would like to start a similar project for the deaf-blind. If so, I can assure him that the expenditure of effort will pay for itself many times over in the satisfaction that comes from a worthwhile task well-done.

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## THE MAIL BOX: "A SAD DAY FOR ILLINOIS"

To the Editor:

As you most likely know, Illinois has adopted the public assistance amendment known as "Title XVI." The blind have been thrown to the wolves. Few blind people knew anything about the amendment, and few knew anything about the bill in Springfield until after it has been passed. THE BLIND AMERICAN was the only magazine that gave any information about the federal plan. I read several journals and THE BLIND AMERICAN was the only one. I do not know what will happen now.

I would like to call your attention to the column "Hindsight" in the NEW OUTLOOK FOR THE BLIND. I wrote to Mr. Barnett [the executive editor] and he has a bit of my letter in his column in the September issue. Judging from his statement, he must get a lot of gripes on this subject. I would bet that most of the complaints are correct. I wrote to him today, urging the Foundation to investigate the complaints and to urge Congress to do something to correct the horrible mess. The government is pouring a lot of money into the states, and the needy have to exist on a subsistence budget.

I have been trying to get copies of the State letters, the official interpretation, and the Federal Handbook. They tell me that that information is not to be given out to anyone but the agencies. Here I have had a hard enough job to get my own personal budget; they are willing to read it to the recipient but do not want to give him a copy. Since we are in a single aid category now, I cannot see why we have to have case workers at all. The war widows just sign a statement once a year; the recipients of social security [insurance] and other systems of pensions do not have them. I do not see any reason why the people on public assistance have to be tormented with them.

It certainly is not a very pleasant thing to have a case worker wanting to peep into the dresser drawers and closets to see what is needed. When I told the social worker on my case that he could not look into my closets, he replied that I would not get the extra clothing. I had been denied the money to pay for a woman to clean for me, so I used the clothing money for that. They would not honor my doctor's letter stating that I was unable to do cleaning. It was not until I wrote to the Attorney General that I got the ten dollars involved, which I had been trying to obtain for something like two years.

Now with the new law I guess they will slaughter me. Put this

in the mail box; I would like to hear from others.

It was a sad day for Illinois when they broke with the National Federation of the Blind.

Sincerely yours,

Miss C. L. Corbin  
4705 W. Harrison Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60644

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### FROM A GLOBETROTTER'S JOURNAL

By Dr. Isabelle Grant

(Editor's note: Dr. Grant, world-famed "ambassador without portfolio" of the National Federation of the Blind, is back in Pakistan to continue her educational work. Following a year in the Asian country, she returned briefly this summer to attend the NFB's annual convention. Further accounts of Dr. Grant's travels and manifold activities in the Far East will appear in future issues of this journal.)

I would like to do something different this time. I shall not talk about my work, nor about that part of the world where I stayed, namely, Pakistan. I would like to take you on a swift run around that western arc of the Pacific and show you some of the most interesting work among blind people I have ever seen. To tell you about my visit to Malaya, where I attended a conference on education and training of blind persons in the Far East would take a chapter in itself.

Malaya is forward-looking, the work for the blind there is progressive. A goodly number of blind persons are being served with opportunity for rehabilitation and training, and not a few are already in open industry. One can say that a beginning has been made. Malaya is, in comparison with other countries in the Far East, a rich country, sitting as it is on tin, with rubber trees dotting its surface, both sources of national income. The British influence is still dominant. A well-stocked braille library administered by a most understanding lady from Palo Alto (wife of a government official), two braille presses,

a long-standing transcribing unit -- these were some of the assets in Malaya that frankly made me somewhat jealous, but happy. In Malaya, the way should now be open for blind persons in the professions. There are still too few leaders among the blind themselves.

Kuala Lumpur, where the conference was held, is a beautiful modern city with lots of people, lots of jobs, lots of educational facilities, lots of water, and loads of the most delectable papayas you ever tasted.

I had a most charming blind friend in Hong Kong. She and I were among the few, the very few, blind persons attending the conference. We met in Hong Kong, where she has charge of a small rehabilitation center. About ten of her trainees were learning the art of ceramics, for possible commercial opportunity once the skill was acquired. The potter's wheel was intriguing and the skill of the workers using it more so. The articles in the display cabinet could be matched in any high-class 'objets d'art' store, for every sort of article was made, glazed, and baked, from simple vases to intricate knick-knacks of fine texture.

I visited another factory, which was essentially a sub-contract factory and called a factory, not a sheltered workshop. In it there were about 170 blind persons, men and women, engaged in the traditional trades, chair-caning, basketry, but also in modern trades.

Watching the making of plastic buttons from the raw plastic stage to the polishing and the piercing of the holes was exciting. I longed to be like the Chinese women there, to get my hands on these machines and get the thrill of actually making buttons. Hong Kong has a large export trade in men's shirts, and, consequently, there is a large industry in button-making. My clumsy fingers would have shown up against the deft and nimble fingers of these women, as they manipulated their enormous installations with ease and safety.

In another area, I thrilled to the quality of classroom chalk they were producing, free from grit, not too brittle, just the right length and thickness for the teacher, and felt I wanted to pocket a few pieces, for I surely needed them. I refrained!

One of the highlights of my Far East journey was the boat trip I made to the Portuguese island of Macao, to see the work for the blind on that little island. It was encouraging, well managed. Time did not permit my going to visit the school for blind children, for I was most interested in visiting and talking with Father Ruiz, that world-renowned saint of the East, who has done so much to feed the Chinese refugees from the mainland of China. Father Ruiz had 18 little orphans in his own compound. He had a long line of refugees every morning to receive

their quota of rice -- men, women, and children, mostly older men and women, and very young refugee children. But, Father Ruiz met them all with a greeting in Chinese, turned to us and spoke English, and to others in Portuguese. His delightful sense of humor in face of such distress and hunger was heart-warming.

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### KENTUCKY CONVENTION: "BIGGEST EVER"

"The biggest convention we have had yet!" declared old-time Federationists attending the annual gathering of the organized blind of Kentucky, held September 20-21 in the Kentucky Hotel, Louisville.

Highlights of the convention program included: a report on the legislative achievements of the KFOB since it was founded in 1946; a report on progress and plans of the State Blind Services Division by the Director and staff, including a demonstration of the abacus for the use of the blind in mathematics; a report by John Nagle, Federation representative in Washington, on federal legislation and on his activities for the organized blind; chapter reports and reports on the Philadelphia convention by delegates.

Elections were held with the following persons chosen to hold state office: R. E. Whitehead, president (re-elected); Margaret Bourne, first vice-president; John Steel, second vice-president; Kenneth Morton, third vice-president; Harold Reagan, recording secretary; Eloise Becker, corresponding secretary; Florence Denham, treasurer. Committee chairmen appointed were: Pat Vice, state legislation, and Glenn Shoulders, finance. The Kentucky Federation will be represented at the 1964 NFB convention by its president, Bob Whitehead, and Ernest Bourne.

More than 100 attended the convention banquet, during which there was a presentation of awards and an address by John Nagle, entitled "Through Unity, To Build a Voice." Honored at the banquet for "outstanding work" were Mrs. Pat Vice, the Federation's legislative chairman since 1958; Mrs. Peggy Traub, who has taught for more than 30 years at the Kentucky School for the Blind, and Pat Thompson, agent of Louisville Carpenters Union, who designed and directed construction of a Boy Scout cabin at the Kentucky School.

In its business sessions the Kentucky Federation adopted three resolutions calling for expanded state services to the blind. Heading the list was a request for the 1964 legislature to appropriate funds for the State Department of Education to begin a pilot program for teaching children who are both blind and deaf.

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## CALIFORNIA SCORES SUCCESS IN CIVIL SERVICE

(Editor's note: The following article by Russell Kletzing is reprinted in abridged form from THE COUNCIL BULLETIN, bi-monthly publication of the California Council of the Blind. Mr. Kletzing, president of the National Federation of the Blind, is also executive secretary and general counsel for the California Council.)

Commencing before the 1957 legislative session, the California Council started talks with the State Personnel Board concerning increased placement of the blind in State Civil Service. Bills introduced in the 1957, 1959, and 1961 general sessions all failed to become law. In the 1962 Budget Session, however, we succeeded in obtaining an augmentation of the State Personnel Board budget for the express purpose of employing a specialist to assist in the placement of blind and other handicapped workers in State Civil Service. California is the first state to establish such a position.

For more than a year this position remained vacant. Last spring the examination was given, which, however, was made promotional with qualifications that excluded nearly all blind persons who might have been interested. Early last July, the appointment was finally made of James R. Wigton to the new position, Placement Specialist for Handicapped Persons. His address is: State Personnel Board, 801 Capitol Mall, Sacramento 14, California.

Mr. Wigton's previous experience was in handicapped placement with the State Employment Service. He served as staff member for the Governor's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped which was where I first met him during the course of giving a talk to that group in the possibility of blind switchboard operators. He undoubtedly represents the best possible choice of those who were

eligible for the examination. Already, Jim Wigton is working to improve employment opportunities for the blind and other handicapped persons in State Civil Service. As with all placement of the blind, this can be expected to be a slow and arduous process. Some steps, however, have already been taken.

As a direct result of Wigton's work, the examination requirements for blind dictaphone operators have been materially modified. A blind applicant will now be allowed twice the examination time to take the written test (utilizing a reader) and will only be required to type 30 words per minute from a dictating machine instead of 45 words per minute. Concerning the reasons for these changes, Wigton said: "To reflect the fact that typing speed from recorded material is usually only about two-thirds of that from printed copy, the blind applicant for this class is now required to type about 30 words per minute while the sighted applicant, being tested in a different manner, must type 45 words per minute. It is believed that this newly adopted testing procedure will result in more blind persons passing the examination. We will then have the opportunity to discuss the qualifications of the successful blind competitors with agencies which have job openings for transcribers."

Another development has recently come to fruition as a result of discussions which began during the recent legislative session. Commencing as of September 1, there is no longer a question on State Civil Service applications concerning physical defects. This means that blind persons can no longer be disqualified from taking examinations on the basis of blindness.

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## MEET THE BLIND WHO LEAD THE BLIND

(Editor's note: Following are biographical sketches of two newly elected members of the Executive Committee of the National Federation of the Blind: Ray Dinsmore and Victor Johnson. Their biographies are reprinted from the latest edition of WHO ARE THE BLIND WHO LEAD THE BLIND, to be distributed by the NFB in October.)

RAY J. DINSMORE

Member, Executive Committee

Orchestra conductor, licensed chiropractor, independent businessman, volunteer social worker, member of an agency board of directors -- these are some of the facets in the varied career of Raymond James Dinsmore.

Born in 1902 in the town of Elwood, Indiana, Dinsmore lost his sight through a medical accident at the age of two -- later recovering slight vision in one eye. He received his education at the state schools for the blind in Ohio and Indiana, and went on to graduate from the Central States College of Chiropractic in Indianapolis. Finding the professional field crowded, Ray went to work as a furniture craftsman until the advent of the great depression of the 1930's induced him to move to New York with his wife, Frances, and two children.

Breaking into the field of entertainment as a musician, Dinsmore organized and conducted an all-blind dance orchestra under auspices of the WPA's Federal Art Project, and subsequently found additional outlet for his musical talents in radio and in work with the Police Athletic League of New York.

During the thirties he became an active volunteer worker with the Blind Industrial Workers' Association of Brooklyn, a cooperative agency owned and operated by blind persons themselves, which included among its functions a workshop, an extensive home work program, and services of counseling and placement. In 1940 Dinsmore was elected business manager of the Association, acting as its representative to the Greater New York Council of Agencies for the Blind. He served for 20 years on the Council's legislative committee and for several years on its public assistance committee; and for 11 years was also a member of the board of directors of the state-wide New York Association of Workers for the Blind. In 1955 he was instrumental in the organization of the Empire State Association for the Blind, which shortly thereafter became affiliated with the National Federation of the Blind.

In 1960 Dinsmore left New York to return to the Hoosier state, settling with his wife in Indianapolis where he started a successful commercial chair-caning and furniture repair business. As active as ever in work with the blind, Ray is president of the Indiana Council of the Blind. He was elected to the Executive Committee of the National Federation in 1963.

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## VICTOR JOHNSON

Member, Executive Committee

Victor Charles Johnson, operator of a successful vending stand business in St. Louis, is a veteran leader in the organized blind movement both of Missouri and of the nation. First elected to a four-year term on the NFB's Executive Committee in 1952, he was again chosen for that office by the national convention in 1963. He has been president and legislative representative of the United Workers for the Blind of Missouri, and has served two terms as president of the Alumni Association of the Missouri School for the Blind.

Born on a Missouri farm in 1899, Victor was several months old before his blindness was discovered -- and for years continued to wear the useless glasses prescribed for him by a country doctor. Fortunately, he was encouraged to enter the state school for the blind in 1907, from which he graduated 13 years later.

After an apprenticeship as a salesman, young Vic Johnson entered a school of osteopathy in Kansas City in 1920, hopeful of a career in one of the few professions then formally open to blind persons. Although he soon dropped out of the institute in disappointment, Johnson successfully resumed his training the following year -- this time at the American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville, Missouri, where he received his degree in 1925. It was there that he met a girl from his home county, Miss Xena Eads, who was attending the State Teachers' College. Following their marriage in 1923, Xena taught at a nearby high school while Victor completed his college training.

In the years that followed it was not only Victor who found himself handicapped professionally by arbitrary stereotypes. The Johnsons discovered that a virtual ban existed in the state schools against married women as teachers. For years both were forced to labor in other fields -- Xena in offices and stores, and Victor at his old trade of door-to-door sales. Finally the passage of the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Stand Act provided a new opportunity, and Johnson was among the first to establish a business in Missouri under the program. His prosperous stand is still situated in the U. S. Court and Customs House in St. Louis, where it first opened in 1937.

In 1922, Johnson joined Missouri's United Workers for the Blind, was elected president in 1927, and later represented the UWB at the state capitol during legislative sessions from 1929 through 1937.

He was again chosen to head the United Workers in 1947, seven years after it had become affiliated with the National Federation of the Blind.

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## BROTHERS . . . & OTHERS

Well-Known Iowans Pass. The recent deaths of two Iowans long prominent in work with the blind have been reported to us by William Klontz, president of the Iowa Association of the Blind. Mrs. Edna Evans of Des Moines, who had worked with the youth of Iowa both blind and deaf for 30 years, passed away July 26 after a protracted illness. Mrs. Evans had traveled voluntarily throughout the state locating many who knew nothing about the schools for the blind and deaf, and starting them on their way to an education. . . . Mrs. Otis O. Rule, a veteran member of the Iowa Association, died in late July at a rest home in Union, Iowa, where she had been living for several years. Mr. Rule is mayor of Ackley, Iowa, where his wife was buried on August 1.

On the brighter side of the Iowa news, President Klontz informs us that "after several years of promises and disappointments the Center for the Blind in Des Moines has finally placed a long-distance dialing operator with the telephone company." Miss Karen Clawson, formerly a switchboard operator at the Center, started work on her new job August 1. . . . Don Walker, principal of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, was inducted into Phi Delta Kappa, international fraternity for men in education, at ceremonies held last July on the Iowa State College Campus at Cedar Falls, Iowa.

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News from Alabama. The annual state convention of the Alabama Federation of the Blind will be held at the Jefferson Davis Hotel in Anniston, October 18-20, according to our state correspondent Barney Abbott of Montgomery. Barney writes us also that a Federation-sponsored bill to increase minimum monthly payments for blind-aid recipients to \$70 has passed the state legislature and gone to Governor Wallace for his signature. . . . Along with our correspondent, THE BLIND AMERICAN wishes to express its sympathy to Mrs. Eulasee Hardenburg, our national secretary, whose mother (Mrs. J. F. Stenson) passed away from a heart attack on August 9.

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Discrimination Reversed. An 18-year-old Wisconsin high school student, turned down as a delegate to a make-believe Boys State because he is blind, was given a conducted tour of the real thing recently as a special guest of Governor John W. Reynolds. As reported in the Des Moines (Iowa) TRIBUNE, the governor asked Tom Teggatz, of Watertown, Wisconsin, to tour the capitol at Madison with him after seeking vainly to get the sponsoring American Legion to accept Tom in the workshop in practical government held annually at Ripon College.

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"Save Your Vision" Week. A resolution designating the first week in March each year as "Save Your Vision Week" was introduced into Congress in early September under wide sponsorship and a high probability of passage. South Dakota's Senator George McGovern, along with others sponsoring the measure, asserted that the proposed week would focus national attention on the need for improved eye care. "There are over one-third of a million blind in the U. S. today," he pointed out, "and 40 percent of these cases result from glaucoma and cataract. Much of this could have been avoided by early detection of disease through physical and laboratory examination. It is estimated that a million Americans over 40 have glaucoma unknowingly. If neglected, glaucoma leads to permanent blindness."

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Teams Bowl Over Maryland. Sixteen members of the Maryland Council of the Blind gathered in mid-September at one of Baltimore's bowling alleys for the purpose of forming a bowling league, according to Marjorie Flack of Baltimore (Maryland correspondent for THE BLIND AMERICAN). At least four teams are expected to make up the new league. Our reporter, relaying information from Council President Clarice Arnold, notes with pride that several new members have been added to the ranks of the MCB in recent months, all of whom are expected to take a very active part in the growing state organization.

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South Dakota Cuts Aid. A reduction of monthly aid payments to the needy blind and other adult recipients of public assistance has been announced by the South Dakota Welfare Commission, according to the newsbulletin FROM THE STATE CAPITOLS. Attributing the cuts to rising costs in nursing home care, the Commission voted in July to decrease payments to blind, aged and disabled recipients to 90 percent of need, effective October 1, as opposed to the present 100 percent allowance.

State Welfare Director Matthew Furze reportedly declared that the increase in welfare appropriations by the 1963 Legislature was not sufficient to absorb the increase in the cost of persons needing nursing home care.

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New Aids and Appliances Catalog. The ninth edition of the Aids and Appliances Catalog, published by the American Foundation for the Blind, is now ready for distribution in both an inkprint and a braille edition. The detailed mail-order catalog lists and describes implements specially designed for use by blind persons under such general headings as: Braille writing equipment; clocks, watches and timers; games; geographical aids (maps); kitchen aids; mathematical aids; medical aids; music aids; scales; sewing aids; thermometers; tools and instruments; travel aids; writing and drawing aids, and "miscellaneous" (not otherwise classifiable).

Requests for the catalogs should be addressed as follows:  
Bureau of Special Services, American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West 16th Street, New York 11, New York.

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Recent Appointments. Thor W. Kolle, Jr., of New York, has been elected president of National Industries for the Blind. A partner in the investment firm of Hemphill, Noyes & Co., the new president succeeds Jansen Noyes, Jr., who will continue as chairman of the NIB board of directors. . . . Thomas E. Caulfield, M.D., was appointed last June to the position of director and administrator of St. Paul's Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, Newton, Massachusetts. Dr. Caulfield, who practices psychiatry in Boston, is a graduate of Holy Cross and Harvard Medical School, whose experience includes clinical and rehabilitation work with the blind. . . .

The Greater Pittsburgh Guild for the Blind announces two new appointments to its Rehabilitation Center: Martha J. Ball as coordinator of specialized instruction, and Robert K. Hughes as coordinator of community mobility. . . . Wesley D. Sprague, former associate director of the New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston, has been chosen for the post of executive director of the New York Association for the Blind Lighthouse, left vacant by the death last March of Allan W. Sherman.

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Save Stamps - Earn Brailier. A unique plan by which organizations of the blind may acquire a Perkins Brailier without cash outlay is described in a recent number of the VFB NEWSLETTER (Virginia Federation of the Blind). Quoting information contained in the ZIEGLER MAGAZINE, the newsletter described the S and H Green Stamp group plan as worked out by the Sperry and Hutchinson Company of New York. Members of the organization are asked to pool their S and H Green Stamps into a single fund, making it possible to acquire such items as the brailier in a relatively short time.

In order to qualify, a representative of the group must file an application with the Group Savings Director, Sperry and Hutchinson Company, 114 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York. He will then receive the approved application and authorization for the group members to transfer their individual stamp holdings to the organization. The Perkins Brailier, while not a regular item in the S and H catalog, is available by special arrangement. When the required number of stamp books have been accumulated and turned in to the local center for redemption, the group will receive a check for the purchase price of the brailier -- made payable to the Howe Press of Perkins School for the Blind. The brailier may then be ordered directly and is said to be available about eight weeks after ordering, according to the newsletter.

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Missourians Set Convention. The second annual convention of the Progressive Blind of Missouri, Inc., will be held November 15 and 16 at the Aladdin Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri, according to information received from Gwen Rittgers. An interesting and informative program has been planned, to be climaxed with a convention banquet at which Congressman Bolling will be guest speaker. Hotel rates are said to be reasonable, and any blind Missourian is welcome to attend, at a registration fee of one dollar per person. Further information may be obtained from Mrs. Tiny Beedle, 342 Myrtle, Kansas City, or Gwen Rittgers, 2627 Lister Avenue, Kansas City.

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College Paper Cites Kletzing. Russell Kletzing, president of the National Federation of the Blind, was named among the famous alumni of the University of California YMCA, Stiles Hall, in a recent issue of the University's student newspaper, THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN. Listed among a group which includes Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Kletzing was described as follows: "Russell Kletzing, assistant chief legal counsel for the State Division of Water Resources, president of the National Federation of the Blind, executive secretary of the California Council of the Blind, and recently cited 'For Superior

Accomplishment' with the Department of Water Resources, was student president of the University Y in 1944-45 although totally blind."

After naming other prominent citizens formerly associated with the campus youth organization, the article concluded: "Each of these noted alumni who seem, more than most men, to place a high value upon service, credit Stiles Hall with having awakened in them the motivation for constructive, progressive service to their fellow human beings."

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D. C. Blind Hold Elections. The Capitol Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind (Washington, D. C.) held its annual election meeting on September 10, with the following chosen for Chapter offices: Vernon Butler, president; Hilda Daugherty, vice-president; Virginia Nagle, treasurer; Mildred Moseley, secretary, Margaret Keller and George Reed, board members.

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Special Traffic Lights Not Unique. A recent news release telling of the installation of special traffic lights for the blind in the Israeli town of Gadera erroneously describes the lights as "the first of the kind anywhere." Arrangements similar to those reported have long been known to blind Americans in various localities (such as Oakland, California, in the traffic areas bordering the State Orientation Center). The news story goes on to state that Gadera is frequented by residents of the nearby Malben Village for the Blind. "About 150 blind persons have been given keys to a special box attached to light standards. When the switch in the box is turned with a key, the regularly flashing yellow warning light changes first to a steady yellow and four seconds later becomes red and a bell rings to tell the blind pedestrian he can cross safely."

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School Eye Safety Law in Ohio. The first state law making mandatory the wearing of eye protection in schools has been passed by the State of Ohio, according to a report in the POB NEWS (official journal of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness). The state measure requires that pupils, teachers and visitors wear eye protective equipment in vocational, industrial arts, chemistry and physics laboratories and workshops.

"With the passage of this bill into law, the State of Ohio took a decisive lead over all others in preventing visual damage and destroyed

sight among school shop and science students," according to John W. Ferree, M.D., executive director of the National Society.

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Dan Bell Picked for Award. Daniel A. Bell, of Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, well-known blind entertainer, has been nominated by the American Foundation for the Blind to receive the annual Lane Bryant Award for outstanding community service. A former naval architect, Bell is currently a semi-finalist in the prize competition. "From one corner of Pennsylvania to another he travels to hospitals, nursing homes, veterans hospitals, correctional institutions, old age homes and orphanages. At each place his magical act of songs, dance and tricks leaves them happy," according to a spokesman for the AFB.

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"One of the main news items of the season," reports THE RETINA, a publication of the Federated Blind of North Dakota, "is the arrival of a new son in the home of our President and his wife, Milfred and Gloria Bakke. Raymond Curtis arrived on August 16, 1963." THE RETINA is itself a new arrival in South Dakota, making its maiden appearance in September. The journal will be published semi-annually as the official organ of the FBND (formerly the North Dakota State Federation of the Blind), which is a state affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind.

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Dollar Hike in California. An increase of one dollar a month in the cost of living for 275,000 aged and blind welfare recipients in California was recently approved by the State Social Welfare Board. Under the hike, the minimum payment for aid to the blind will be \$125 and the maximum \$175, according to FROM THE STATE CAPITALS. State law requires the board to make annual adjustments in welfare grants to blind and aged recipients based upon a cost of living index.

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Recipe Book in Braille. Anyone interested in a braille edition of the "Birdseye Frozen Foods Recipe Book" may obtain a copy of the 38-page volume -- containing instructions for preparation of all frozen Birdseye products -- for 55¢ postage from Braille Transcribing Service, New York Association for the Blind, 110 East 60th Street, New York 22, New York. Payment should accompany the order.

(We are indebted for this item to THE OBSERVER, monthly newsletter of the Montana Association for the Blind.)

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Idaho Convention. The Gem State Blind, Inc., held its annual convention in Boise, August 23-25. Russell Kletzing, president of the National Federation of the Blind, was the keynote speaker. Mrs. Eleanor Bodahl, Idaho state supervisor for special education, also spoke, along with Mrs. Elsie Geddes, supervisor of special education in Boise, who described the work in integrating blind and partially sighted children into the district home schools in Boise. Recreation included a swimming trip to Givens Hot Springs, a dance on the final evening of the convention at the Boise Hotel, where convention meetings were held, and a breakfast Sunday morning sponsored by the Bench Lions of Boise, who also provided bus transportation for the group throughout the convention.

Other speakers at various meetings included Jerry Ranson, state counsellor for the rehabilitation of the blind, who discussed services available in Idaho, and state legislator, Mr. Fred Koch, of Ada County, who spoke on the work of the last Idaho legislature concerning the blind.

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